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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (06/02): PALESTINIANS: GIVE
OBAMA A CHANCE

Main Stories:

All dailies lead with wires reports about President Obama's intention to study steps the U.S. may take in response to Israel's refusal to halt settlement activities. Among possible measures is a change to the "guarantee" of a U.S. veto on U.N. resolutions opposed by Israel and more official U.S. statements criticizing Israel's expansion of settlements. Al-Quds leads with a headline quoting Israeli Premier Netanyahu calling a halt to settlement activities "an unreasonable American request." Netanyahu is also quoted in Al-Ayyam telling the Israeli Knesset that, "Israel will not freeze life in the West Bank settlements," and stressing that, "Israel will not build new settlements but at the same time, will not prohibit natural growth inside existing settlements either."

All dailies front page news about June 1 attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinian villages in the Nablus area, which resulted in the injury of more than 6 Palestinians and burning of hundreds of acres of olive farms. The attack was committed by 200 settlers, according to reporting. Another "attack" also makes the front pages - six Palestinians in the northern Qalqilyah area were injured by stones thrown by Israeli settlers. All dailies run lead photos of settlers burning Palestinian farms with inside page photos showing injured Palestinians.

All front pages report on Palestinian Authority(PA) Premier Fayyad speaking at the PA cabinet meeting on June 1. Fayyad again commented publically on the May 31 "bloody confrontations" between the PA and Hamas militants in Qalqilyah, according to reporting. Fayyad also again praised PA security forces for maintaining law and order in the Palestinian Territories and stressed that the PA won't allow chaos. Fayyad reiterated Palestinian demands that the U.S. pressure Israel into respecting international law and road map

obligations, including a halt to settlement activities and acceptance of the two-state solution, according to coverage.

The front pages of Al-Hayat Al-Jadida and Al-Ayyam and an inside page of Al-Quds report on a press interview with U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Scobey. Scobey stresses that President Obama considers reaching a regional peace settlement as a priority.

President Obama and his policies are very popular in the Arab and Muslim world according to Al-Hayat Al-Jadida's front page that runs the results of a poll conducted recently in 9 Arab countries, including the Palestinian Territories. The poll was conducted by the Ghalob Foundation that believes that Obama's popularity is based on his "promotion of dialogue and mutual respect with the Muslim World."

All front pages report that Palestinian Authority (PA) Premier Fayyad noted on June 1 that salaries for PA civil servants will be paid on June 7, despite the serious financial crisis facing the PA.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Mamun Fandi opines in Al-Quds independent daily under the title, "Will the Arabs lose Obama" (06/02): "The U.S. has never had a president as sensitive to the need to promote human rights, fairness and justice, as Obama... the Arabs must try to see him as a friend, instead of making him an enemy,... The Arabs must think carefully before reacting to President Obama's anticipated speech from Cairo. The Arabs should accept and acknowledge the role of Saudi Arabia and Egypt in managing Arab-U.S. relations on behalf of the Arab world,

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and stop... the criticism of this role... We should stop using a disparaging tone every time we hear an encouraging remark [from the U.S.], claiming falsely that we are being patriotic. We should give this President a chance."

2) Muhannad Abdil Hamid opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title "The power struggle flu" (06/02): " Hamas wants to impose its power as a resistance force [in reference to May 31 clashes with the Palestinian Authority in Qalqilyah]... Hamas is not willing to compromise on anything that would alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza. Hamas doesn't even approve of pursuing Gaza reconstruction or opening the border crossings or even ending the siege if these actions are not conducted under Hamas' authority... Hamas' compromises wouldn't necessarily mean that Hamas would have to abandon its national principles... but it could mean forming a national consensus government to end the chaos."

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